REMARKS

The Office Action of July 13, 2004, has been carefully reviewed, and in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

In the above Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12-13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Spence* (U.S. Patent No. 4,919,888); claims 3, 4, 7-9 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Spence* in view of *Quehl* (U.S. Patent No. 4,165,404); claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Spence* in view of *Quehl* and further in view of *Limbacher et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,837,181); and claims 11, 14 and 19-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Spence* in view of *Houston et al* (U.S. Patent No. 5,894,014).

The primary reference upon which the Examiner relies, *Spence,* relates to a container system with a safety seal. The container is adapted to store objects and to keep the objects sterile until they are needed. The safety seal is further adapted to shrink under the influence of heat.

Referring to col. 6, lines 18-22 of the *Spence*, the container system is "inserted into the sterilization device," such as a sterilization device which uses steam as the sterilant. The filter means in the base 12 and/or lid 14 allow the entry and exit of sterilant into and out of the sterilization container 10 while it is being sterilized. Col. 3, lines 36-40. Based upon this description, it is clear that the container system 10 of *Spence* it placed within a portion of the sterilization device where the surrounding atmosphere defines the sterilization conditions, and the filter means allows the sterilant to enter the container system 10.

As amended above, the invention of claim 1 is directed to a sterilisation chamber comprising at least an inlet integrally formed with the chamber for connection to a sterilant source from the sterilisation device, wherein an interior of the sterilisation chamber is pressurized. Hence, unlike the container system 10 of *Spence*, the sterilization chamber of the present invention is not dependent upon being placed within a portion of the sterilization device wherein the surrounding atmosphere defines the sterilization conditions, but rather, the sterilization chamber itself has an inlet for connection to a sterilant source. Thus, in contrast to *Spence*, the sterilization chamber of the present invention can be mounted in the sterilization device and to define the sterilization enclosure in the sterilization device. The container in *Spence* must be inserted into an enclosure defining sterilization conditions in order for the contents of the container system 10 to be sterilized.

Thus, for at least the reasons set forth above, the container in *Spence* would not be considered a sterilization chamber as understood in the art and it does not form a sterilisation chamber comprising at least an inlet integrally formed with the chamber for connection to a sterilant source from the sterilisation device, as recited in claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is therefore not anticipated by *Spence*. The remaining claims depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and are thus also patentable for at least the reasons set forth above.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims of the present application are now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application; the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned counsel for Applicant regarding the same.

Respectfully submitted,

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